

Carter Orchestra

By Richard Van Wagoner

James Carter was born in Lehi in 1867. Though he worked at the Lehi Sugar Factory and for many years farmed and operated a custom threshing business, he was a musician at heart. For a time, he found an outlet in the Silver Band and the Smuin Orchestra. But in 1909, Carter formed a group which included his son Kay, Josie and Darrell. For nearly fifty years they were popular entertainers at Lehi Old Folks Parties, dances, clubs, weddings and birthday celebrations.

In June 1913, the family opened the Arcade Dance Hall on Fifth West and State Street. For five years the Carter Orchestra played for a multitude of dances in the hall. In addition to the Carters, band members were Edris Asher and Fern Gough Johnson on the piano. Bill Asher on the violin, and Bill Kirkham on the banjo.

Regular dance night at the Arcade was Thursday. The cost of a ticket was just 50 cents. Special dances such as Halloween Costume Balls, Fireman's Balls, Red Cross Dances, and weddings were also popular. In 1918, Carter sold the Arcade to Allen Doll who continued to operate it successfully until 1927, when he began to encounter financial difficulties. During the Depression years, before the hall closed, Carter's Orchestra playing for a percentage of the revenue, made as little as 1.50 a dance.

James Carter died on 3 January 1934, but his sons and daughter Nessie continued to entertain under the name Carter Brothers Orchestra. As late as the 1960's, the group, under the direction of Ray Carter remained a popular dance orchestra. Since the tradition of "old time" music had been passed down through the group they were often requested to play music for such numbers as the Plain Quadrille, March Quadrille, Water Quadrille, Rag Quadrille, Polka Schottische, two Step, Chicago Glide, Baltimore, Minuet, and Three Step. At the time of the

dissolution of the band the members were Ray Carter, Darrell Carter, Nessie Carter Wilde, Jim Carter, Vivian Carter, and Leon (Rod) Kirkham.